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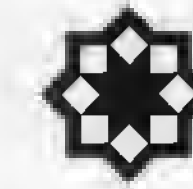
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Foreword by Dr. Mohammad Baazmool

In the Name of Allaah, the all-Merciful, the Possessor of Mercy...

All praise is due to Allaah, we praise Him, seek His Help and His Forgiveness. We seek refuge with Him from the evils of our own souls and from the evil results of our (bad) deeds. Whomever Allaah guides, none can lead astray; and whomever Allaah leads astray, none can guide. I openly testify that there is no deity worthy of worship other than Allaah, who is alone without a single partner. I further testify that Muhammad was His Servant and Messenger (may Allaah raise his rank and grant him peace).

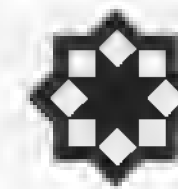
To proceed:

I do not know about the (quality of this) translation, nor do I speak English well!

However, I do know that the author of this book, *Questions and Answers Concerning the Foundations of Faith and the Obstacles in its Path*, is the virtuous *shaykh*, the scholar of *fiqh*, *tafseer*, and *usool*, the masterful author, the great scholar of Qaseem of his time, 'Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn Naasir as-Sa'dee. He was born in the year 1307, and he died in the year 1376. His writings were outstanding due to the following affairs:

- ❖ His clear writing style and way of composition, and his choice of easily understandable words and phrases;

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Translator's Foreword

In the Name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, may He raise the rank of His Messenger and grant him peace.

To proceed:

In an effort to help spread clarity about the basics of the Islaamic belief system, we present this translation of the highly beneficial book by the great scholar, al-'Allaamah 'Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn Naasir as-Sa'dee, may Allaah have Mercy on him.

The book consists of two separate but related treatises. In the first one, *"Essential Questions and Answers Concerning the Foundations of Eemaan (Faith),"* as-Sa'dee – may Allaah have Mercy on him – poses and answers 22 questions about *Eemaan* and its related affairs. He begins by introducing *towheed* and its categories, and then he deals with *Eemaan* and its pillars. He includes questions on *shirk*, hypocrisy, and innovation. Also discussed are the rights of the Muslims over us, including the rights of the Messenger of Allaah (may Allaah raise his rank and grant him peace), his Companions (may Allaah be pleased with them), and the Muslim leaders. He then completes the first treatise by describing the Straight Path and those who are upon it.

After clarifying the affairs of *Eemaan*, the author then goes on to explain why the majority of the people have turned away from it in the second treatise, *"Obstacles in the Path of Eemaan (Faith)."* He discusses 10 things

that prevent many people from embracing true faith, mentioning proofs and examples from the Book of Allaah for each one.

The following is the complete name of the original Arabic book that was used for this translation:

سُؤَالٌ وَجَوَابٌ فِي أَهَمِّ الْمُهَمَّاتِ:
تَعْلِيمُ أَصُولِ الْإِيمَانِ وَبَيَانُ مَوَانِعِ الْإِيمَانِ

It was published by *Maktabatu Adhwaa' As-Salaf* in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. While I benefited from the footnotes of Ashraf 'Abdul-Maqsood found in this printing, all footnotes found in this translation are from the translator, unless otherwise noted.

Furthermore, I have included many Arabic terms within the text of the book and in the footnotes. All Arabic terminology used in the book may be found in a glossary in the back of the book. I hope this strengthens the reader's Arabic vocabulary and acts as an incentive to study the language of the Qur'aan.

As this is a book for beginners, I tried to keep the book simple by not adding a lot of comments or references. I aimed to keep the footnotes limited to referencing the Qur'aanic Verses and Prophetic narrations, explaining Arabic terminology, or important notes to assist those who study or even teach the book.

I have also included references to Qur'aanic passages used within the text of the book, those that have been used within the speech of the author without mention that they are from the Qur'aan.

For further benefit, I have also included a biography of the author before his introduction. Also, a complete list of all books referred to in the footnotes is available in the reference section at the back of the book.

We must offer our sincere thanks to our beloved *shaykh* and teacher, Dr. Muhammad 'Umar Baazmool, Professor of Higher Studies at Umm al-Quraa University, who took the time to go over parts of the Arabic book and review the commentary found in the footnotes of this translation with me. May Allaah reward him well. Thanks are also due to TROID Publications, 'Alee Yahyaa an-Nahwee, and Umm al-Haarith as well. May Allaah reward them all generously for their part in this work.

So we put forth this effort, hoping that Allaah accepts it from us and blesses it, making it a source of guidance for our English speaking brothers and sisters. We also ask Allaah to increase the reward of the author, to forgive him, and to grant him Mercy and a high position in Paradise.³

Moosaa Richardson

1424/12/15

³ Reviewed and updated for the second printing, 1434 (2013). This same book was later translated by another American student of knowledge. While he apologized to me personally and claimed not to know about my work, I did not want to reprint it since it was perhaps no longer needed, as the English speaking Muslims could rely on his translation instead. However, he has recently involved himself in a number of affairs that have caused many to lose trust in him and his work (may Allaah correct his affairs). And so a decision was made to prepare our translation for a second printing, hoping it to be something pleasing to Allaah. And Allaah knows best.

Author's Biography

He was the *shaykh*, Aboo 'Abdillaah 'Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn Naasir Ibn 'Abdillaah Ibn Naasir As-Sa'dee from the tribe of Tameem.

He was born in the city of 'Unayzah, in the region of Qaseem (Eastern Saudi Arabia), on the 12th of Muharram in the year 1307. He memorized the Qur'aan and mastered its recitation before he reached the age of 11 years. He then engaged himself in seeking knowledge, studying with the scholars of his city and those who visited it.

Some of his teachers were:

- ✽ Shaykh Ibraaheem Ibn Hamad ibn Jaasir (d.1338)
- ✽ Shaykh Muhammad Ibn Abdil-Kareem ash-Shibl
- ✽ Shaykh Saalih Ibn 'Uthmaan (d.1351), the judge of 'Unayzah, who he spent a great amount of time studying from
- ✽ Shaykh Muhammad al-Ameen ash-Shinqeetee (d.1351), who resided in 'Unayzah for four years
- ✽ And Shaykh 'Alee Ibn Naasir Aboo Waadee (d.1361), who gave the *shaykh* an *ijazah*⁴ in the six main books of *hadeeth*.

⁴ *Ijaazah* (إجازة) – permission to narrate using the teacher's chain of narration

The *shaykh* had a number of other teachers as well. He received *ijaazaat* from some of them in various Islaamic sciences.

As-Sa'dee had exemplary character. He was extremely humble with the old and young alike. He would talk to all individuals according to their levels of understanding, and he would lead them to things that would benefit them. He was indifferent and aloof from the splendor and temptations of this worldly life. He did not seek positions of authority.

In the early years of his studies, he learned *fiqh* according to the Hanbalee *math-hab*. At that time, it was considered blameworthy in his society to go against the positions of the Hanbalee *math-hab*. However, it was by way of the books of Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn al-Qayyim that he and other scholars of that era began to shun the blind-following of their *math-hab*. After realizing the need to return all affairs back to the Book of Allaah, the *Sunnah* of the Messenger (may Allaah raise his rank and grant him peace), and the understanding of the Companions (may Allaah be pleased with them), Allaah raised his status and caused the people to seek him out. It was then that he began to author books and gain prominence.⁵

He was a shining light of guidance in his time. He admonished the people both publicly and privately, gave *khutbahs*, issued Religious verdicts, and authored many books in the Islaamic sciences of *tafseer*, *hadeeth*, *usool*, and others. From them:

- ✽ *Tayseer al-Kareem ar-Rahmaan fee Tafseer Kalaam al-Mannaan*, his highly beneficial *tafseer* of the Qur'aan praised by many

⁵ Refer to Muhammad Ibn Sulaymaan Aali al-Bassaam's Introduction to *at-Ta'leeq wa Kashf an-Niqab* (p.10).

scholars, like Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (d.1421), who said it is from the best books of *tafseer*⁶

- ✽ *al-Qawaa'id wal-Usool al-Jaami'ah* in the science of *Usool al-Fiqh*
- ✽ *Risaalah Lateefah Jaami'ah fee Usool al-Fiqh al-Muhimmah*, an excellent beginner's guide to *Usool al-Fiqh*
- ✽ *Manhaj as-Saalikeen*, a concise manual of *fiqh* for beginners
- ✽ *Fitnatud-Dajjaal wa Ya'jooj wa Ma'jooj*
- ✽ *Bahjatu Quloob al-Abraar*, a concise explanation of 99 essential narrations of the Prophet (may Allaah raise his rank and grant him peace)

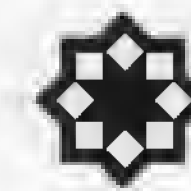
He authored more than 40 works, and there also exists a compilation of his *fataawaa* that was compiled after his death.⁷

He was indeed a man of sincere advice for the Muslims, having great concern for their affairs. This is evident from his advises, *khutbahs*, and a number of outstanding passages in his books.⁸

⁶ From Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen's introduction to *ar-Risaalah's* printing of as-Sa'dee's *Tafseer* (p.11).

⁷ According to Muhammad ibn Sulaymaan Aali al-Bassaam in his introduction to *at-Ta'leeq wa Kashf an-Niqab* (p.19-20).

⁸ For example, look at his beautiful admonition in Question #22 or his sharp advice to school administrators and teachers in his discussion of the first obstacle in the path of *Eemaan*. And since he reached a time of division in the *ummah*, a time when the Muslims did not have central leadership, he made sure to include a point about the importance of central leadership in Question #20.



What Is the Definition of *Towheed* and What Are Its Categories?

The comprehensive definition of *towheed* that includes all of its categories is as follows:

Tawheed is a person's knowledge, belief, and outward acknowledgement that the Lord alone has every Attribute of perfection. He (the person) also believes that there is no one who shares with Him in these Attributes, none similar to Him in His Perfection, and that He possesses the sole right to be worshipped by all of His creation. The person then devotes all forms of worship to Him alone.

Included in this definition are all three categories of *towheed*:

1) *Towheed ar-Ruboobiyyah* (تَوْحِيدُ الرَّبُوبِيَّةِ):

It is to acknowledge that only the Lord creates and provides for His creation, and He alone takes care of all their affairs.

2) *Towheed al-Asmaa' was-Sifaat*, (تَوْحِيدُ الْأَسْمَاءِ وَالصِّفَاتِ):

It is to affirm all the beautiful Names and Attributes that Allaah has affirmed for Himself and those that His Messenger Muhammad (may Allaah raise his rank and grant him peace) affirmed for Him, without

likening Him to His creation¹² or claiming that He is similar to anything,¹³ and without perverting the texts¹⁴ or declaring them to be devoid of any real meaning.¹⁵

3) *Towheed al-'Ibaadah*, (تَوْحِيدُ الْعِبَادَةِ):¹⁶

It is to single out Allaah with all the different types and varieties of one's worship, making them all sincerely for Allaah alone, without ascribing a single partner to Him in any of that.

These are the three categories of *towheed* that a person can not be considered a *muwah-hid*¹⁷ without holding fast to and putting into practice.

¹² *Tashbeeh* (تَشْبِيه): To claim that Allaah is similar to His Creation in one or some of His Attributes or Actions.

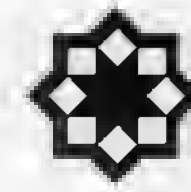
¹³ *Tamtheel* (تَمْثِيل): To claim that Allaah is similar to His Creation in all of His Attributes and Actions. For a detailed explanation of *tashbeeh* and *tamtheel*, refer to the book, *Exemplary Principles Concerning the Beautiful Names and Attributes of Allaah* (TROID Publications, 2nd ed., p.77-78).

¹⁴ *Tahreef* (تَحْرِيف), also referred to as *ta'weel* (تَأْوِيل): To pervert the meanings of the texts that establish Allaah's Names and Attributes.

¹⁵ *Ta'teel* (تَعْطِيل): To claim that Allaah's Names or Attributes have no meanings at all.

¹⁶ *Towheed al-'ibaadah* is also called *towheed al-uloohiyyah* (تَوْحِيدُ الْأُلُوْهِیَّةِ).

¹⁷ *Muwah-hid* (مُوحِد): one who worships Allaah alone upon *towheed* (true Islamic monotheism), i.e. a Muslim.



What Is *Eemaan* and What Is *Islaam*? And What Are Their Main Components?

Eemaan is a firm conviction in everything that Allaah and His Messenger (may Allaah raise his rank and grant him peace) have ordered us to believe in. *Eemaan* also includes *Islaam*, the outward actions of the Religion.¹⁸ And *Islaam* is submission to Allaah alone paired with obedience to Him. As for their main components, then they are found in this noble Verse:

﴿قُولُوا ءَامَنَّا بِاللّٰهِ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ
وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَمَا أُوتِيَ النَّبِيُّونَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ
وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ﴾

"Say: We have believed in Allaah and what He has sent down to us, and also what was sent down to Ibraaheem (Abraham), Ismaa'eel (Ishmael), Is-haaq (Isaac), Ya'qoob (Jacob), and the tribes, and also what was given to Moosaa (Moses) and 'Eesaa (Jesus), and what was given to the (other) prophets from their Lord. We do not make any distinction between any of them, and we are those who submit to Him."¹⁹

¹⁸ This is understood more clearly when reading the conclusion of this chapter: "*Eemaan* pertains to the beliefs in the heart, and *Islaam* pertains to the performance of outward actions." When the terms *Eemaan* and *Islaam* are used separately, then one may refer to the other.

¹⁹ Soorah Al-Baqarah, 2:136

An example of this is what the Prophet (may Allaah raise his rank and grant him peace) mentioned in his statement:

((آيَةُ الْمُنَافِقِ ثَلَاثٌ، إِذَا حَدَّثَ كَذَبَ،
وَإِذَا وَعَدَ أَخْلَفَ، وَإِذَا اتُّمِّنَ خَانَ.))

"The signs of a hypocrite are three: (1) When he speaks, he lies;
(2) when he makes a promise, he breaks it;
And (3) when he is given a trust, he betrays it."⁵⁸

Eemaan and righteous actions will not benefit a person with the presence of *kufr akbar*⁵⁹ or *nifaaq akbar*. But as for the lesser forms of *kufr* and hypocrisy, then it is possible that they be found together along with *Eemaan*, and such a person has some good and some evil in him, some reasons to be rewarded and some reasons to be punished.

⁵⁸ An authentic *hadeeth* collected by al-Bukhaaree (#33) and Muslim (#208-209) on the authority of Aboo Hurayrah, may Allaah be pleased with him.

⁵⁹ *Kufr akbar* (كُفْرٌ أَكْبَرُ) - the major forms of disbelief that cause one to exit the fold of Islaam. *Nifaaq* is one of the types of *kufr akbar*, along with mockery of the Religion, rejecting in any part of it, doubting it, or turning away from it.

Kufr asghar (كُفْرٌ أَصْغَرُ) - the lesser forms of disbelief that may lead one to *kufr akbar*, but they do not take a person outside of Islaam in and of themselves, like certain kinds of major sins, such as fighting a Muslim.



What Is Innovation and What Are Its Categories?

Bid'ah (بَدْعَةٌ), or innovation, is that which contradicts the *Sunnah*.
There are two categories of *bid'ah*:

[1] *Bid'ah I'tiqaadiyyah* (بَدْعَةُ اِعْتِقَادٍ)⁶⁰ - Innovation in One's Belief

This is to believe in something contradictory to what Allaah and His Messenger (may Allaah raise his rank and grant him peace) have informed us of. It is what is referred to in the statement of the Prophet (may Allaah raise his rank and grant him peace):

((وَسَتَفْتَرِقُ أُمَّتِي عَلَى ثَلَاثٍ وَسَبْعِينَ فِرْقَةً،
كُلُّهَا فِي النَّارِ إِلَّا وَاحِدَةً))

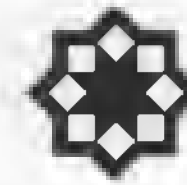
"And my nation will split up into 73 sects.
All of them will be in the Fire except one."

They asked, "Which one is that, O Messenger of Allaah?" He replied:

((مَنْ كَانَ عَلَى مِثْلِ مَا أَنَا عَلَيْهِ الْيَوْمَ وَأَصْحَابِي))

"Those who are upon the likes of what I

⁶⁰ One could also say: *Bid'atun I'tiqaadiyyah* (بَدْعَةُ اِعْتِقَادِيَّةٍ).



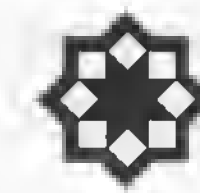
What Are the Characteristics of the Believers that Give Them Distinction from the Disbelievers?

This is a great question indeed. By knowing the difference between the believers and other people, the difference between the truth and falsehood becomes distinctly clear, as does the difference between the people of eternal happiness and the people of eternal misery.

Know that the true believer is the one who believes in Allaah and all of His Names and Attributes found in the Book and the *Sunnah*, with their proper understandings. They must be fully acknowledged. Furthermore, the believer exalts Allaah, declaring Him free of anything that contradicts the perfection of His Names and Attributes. Thus, his heart becomes full of *Eemaan*, knowledge, conviction, and serenity, and becomes totally concerned with Allaah.

The believer repents to Allaah alone, performing acts of worship for Him that He has legislated upon the tongue of His Prophet (may Allaah raise his rank and grant him peace), with sincerity to Allaah, hoping for His Reward and fearing His Punishment.

The believer is thankful to Allaah within his heart, with his tongue, and with the actions of his limbs. He is thankful for Allaah's Blessings and the great amount of goodness that Allaah has given him which he enjoys at all hours of the day. The believer is thankful and utters phrases of Allaah's remembrance, and he does not see any blessing greater than what Allaah has given him, nor any token of generosity greater than what has come from Allaah.



Ignorance of *Eemaan*, Not Knowing Its Reality, and Not Pondering Over Its Lofty Teachings and Guidance

Ignorance of beneficial teachings is the biggest barrier and the greatest obstacle in the path of reaching the Truth and the fine manners that come with it.

Allaah says:

﴿بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِمَا لَمْ يُحِيطُوا بِعِلْمِهِ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِهِمْ تَأْوِيلُهُ﴾

"Rather they (the polytheist Arabs of Makkah) **disbelieved in what they could not encompass of its knowledge (the Qur'aan), while its *ta'weel* had not (yet) come to them.**"⁸³

Allaah has informed us that their disbelief was a result of their ignorance and their lack of encompassing His Knowledge, and that the *ta'weel*, which means "punishment" in this Verse, had not reached them, something that would require someone to return to the Truth and acknowledge it.

And Allaah says:

﴿وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ جَاهِلُونَ﴾

⁸³ Soorah Yoonus (10):39

Allaah has shown His Signs that clarify the Truth in the distant lands, and even within the people themselves.¹⁰⁸ These signs show that He is the Truth, His Messengers are the Truth, His Recompense is the Truth, all of His Reports are the Truth, and His Religion is the Truth. So what remains after the Truth except misguidance?¹⁰⁹

However, the rebellion of the scientists and their pride has come between them and the beneficial Truth. There is nothing that will benefit them in any way except the Truth.

So the discerning believer knows, by his insight's illumination, that those people are indeed upon clear misguidance and multiple layers of blindness.

We praise Allaah for the blessing of Guidance.

¹⁰⁸ Allaah the Exalted says (*Soorah Fussilat*, 41:53):

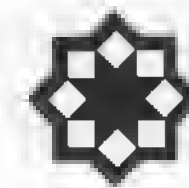
﴿سَنُرِيهِمْ ءَايَاتِنَا فِي الْآفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ﴾

"And We will show them Our Signs in the horizons and within their own selves, so that it becomes clear to them that He is the Truth."

¹⁰⁹ Allaah the Most High says (*Soorah Yoonus*, 10:32):

﴿فَذَلِكُمُّ رَبُّكُمُ الْحَقُّ ۖ فَمَاذَا بَعَدَ الْحَقِّ إِلَّا الضَّلَالُ﴾

"That is Allaah, your Lord, the Truth,
so then what is after the Truth except misguidance?"



Total Reliance upon Physical Sciences

Physical scientists and their dazzled followers claim that Mankind had not attained cultivation or true intellect until these recent years when knowledge of physical and natural sciences has become widespread. They claim that, before this, they had not reached any real guidance.

This audacious viewpoint is so foolish and arrogant! It is a rejection of established truths and a clear lie. This is not hidden from anyone who has the slightest intellect that has not been corrupted by these disgusting opinions.

For if they had only said that material advances, industry, invention, and developments in natural sciences have only just recently become more developed, everyone would have agreed with them. However, for them to exaggerate and say that these recent developments are the correct sciences, the established facts, and with them come good character, then this is from the most untruthful of affairs.

Rather, correct intellects and correct teachings are only known by their results, evidences, and goals. Also, their perfection or deficiency is only known by these same things.

Look to the perfection and loftiness of the beliefs, manners, Religious and worldly affairs, mercy and wisdom found in what Muhammad (may Allaah raise his rank and grant him peace) came with! The Muslims learned these affairs from him, and when they implemented them, they were led to every kind of good thing, in both Religious and worldly